

Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System,
Plant 4, Worker Cottage
(Building No. 115)
Bishop Creek
Bishop Vicinity
Inyo County
California

HAER No. CA-145-4-F

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PHOTOGRAPHS

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
San Francisco, California

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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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Location: Near Bishop Creek in North 1/2 of the Southeast 1/4 of Section 19, Township 7 South, Range 32 East, M.D.M, Inyo County, California (UTM 11/368860/4133060), on the eastern Sierra Nevada Mountain Range approximately 2.5 miles southwest of the town of Bishop, and 225 air miles due north of Los Angeles.

Date of Construction: c. 1928

Builder: Nevada-California Power Company

Present Owner: Southern California Edison Company
2244 Walnut Grove Avenue
Rosemead, CA 91770

Original Use: Worker Cottage

Present Use: Worker Cottage

Significance: Building 115 Plant 4 (formerly Building No. 22, Plant 4), a Craftsman Style cottage, is a rare, surviving example of early worker's housing at the Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System. The unusual size and style of building 115 signifies it as one assigned to management or supervisory staff. Built in 1905, Plant 4 was the first on the Bishop Creek System, and it remains the system's operating headquarters. The Bishop Creek System is considered significant for its role: (1) in the expansion of hydroelectric generation technology, (2) in the development of eastern California, and (3) in the development of long-distance power transmission and distribution.

Report Prepared By: Thomas T. Taylor, Senior Archaeologist
Southern California Edison Company
Environmental Affairs Division
Rosemead, CA 91770

Date: July 31, 1997

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I. DESCRIPTION

Building 115, Plant 4 is a one story Craftsman Style cottage located about 175 feet northeast of the Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System Plant 4 powerhouse on the east side of the main Plant 4 residential street. This cottage was part of a residential enclave of 12 houses, many of which have been demolished, where the Plant 4 workers lived (Photo 145-4-F-1). This house was designed by Rex D. Weston of the architectural firm *The Bungalowcraft Company* of Los Angeles. Characterized as a "six room bungalow" by the designer, the house retains its original outside dimensions and floor-plan (SCE Drawings 439260 and 4392261). It has had major alterations from the original condition. The unusual size of this house, its unique design, and its position near the powerhouse suggests that it was assigned to Company management or supervisory staff. It is presently in use as a guest house.

Building 115 is primarily rectangular-in-plan with three short, right-angled, gable-ended wings on three of the four corners (photos 145-4-F-2, 145-4-F-3, 145-4-F-4, and 145-4-F-5). It has a rough textured stucco finish over a wood frame, and sits on a concrete foundation. The composition shingle roof, which replaced the original wood shingles, is steeply pitched with projecting purlins and exposed rafters under the eaves (photo 145-4-F-6). The roofs four ridges are covered by simulated Spanish-style tiles. The roof is pierced by one stucco-clad chimney; an exterior batter-sided chimney projects from the northeast wall (photo 145-4-F-2).

The house features a three-part, segmental arched window on the northwest gable-end at the front of the house (photo 145-4-F-7); the two outside segments are casement windows. More typically, the building has wood-framed 8-light casement windows in paired arrangements (photo 145-4-F-2), or 1-light over 1-light, wood-framed, double-hung windows (photo 145-4-F-4). All window openings have projecting plaster sills but no other surrounding trim. The original design drawing shows three 8-light fixed windows next to the front door overlooking the front porch (SCE Drawing 439260). These have been replaced by an aluminum-framed sliding-glass door (photo 145-4-F-6). In addition, the shutters shown on this same drawing on either side of the casement windows on the front (northwest) side of the house, have been removed.

The house lot is landscaped more elaborately than the other houses in the Plant 4 residential enclave. The wide lawn at the northern corner of the house is separated from the house by a cobblestone trim which delineates an area landscaped in low shrubs (photo 145-4-F-2). A large mature tree on the west side and a smaller mature tree on the south side shade the house (Photo 145-4-F-3). The front door is accessed from the main residential street (west) by a concrete walkway trimmed by a decorative concrete-laid angular-stone retaining wall (photo 145-4-F-8), and steps to the extended concrete front porch which is framed by a concrete-laid cobblestone

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wall. A concrete walkway from the southwest also provides access to the front porch and wraps around the southwest side of the house, connecting to the rear door and a concrete patio (photos 145-4-F-3 and 145-4-F-4).

The living room, formal dining room, and kitchen connect one to the other. The bedrooms and bathroom are connected to each other and to the dining room by two halls joined together at a right angle.

The flush and glazed front door leads to the 13 x 22 foot living room which features a tapered plaster ceiling framed by crown molding, the large segmental window at the southwest end, and a brick facade covering the original fireplace surround (photo 145-4-F-9). The fireplace is framed by paired full-length 8-light casement windows (photo 145-4-F-10). Flooring is wall-to-wall carpet framed by a wide baseboard. A ceiling fan and florescent fixture illuminate the room.

The living room is separated from the 12 x 17 foot dining room by a simple wall/ceiling partition (photo 145-4-F-11). The look of the northwestern wall has been changed by replacement of the three original full-length 8-light windows with a sliding-glass door (photo 145-4-F-12). A panel door on the southwest wall leads to the kitchen. Like the living room, flooring is wall-to-wall carpet framed by a wide baseboard. A ceiling florescent fixture provides illumination.

The 9 x 12 foot remodeled kitchen features built-in cabinets of the same 1950s style as the other Bishop Creek houses (photo 145-4-F-13). A 1-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-framed window pierces the southwest wall above the sink, and paired casement windows pierce the northwest wall. A recessed telephone alcove and cabinet is present on the northeast wall (photo 145-4-F-14), and a recessed area in the southwest wall accommodates the refrigerator (photo 145-4-F-15). A door through the southwest wall accesses the utility room. Walls and ceiling in the kitchen and throughout the house are plaster. Flooring in the kitchen is linoleum framed by a wide baseboard. Illumination is provided by a single ceiling fixture and a single wall fixture over the sink.

The 6 x 9 foot utility room features shelving, and plumbing and vents for a washer and dryer. Paired casement windows pierce the southwest wall next to the paneled and glazed rear door (photo 145-4-F-16). Like the kitchen, flooring is linoleum framed by a wide baseboard. A single ceiling fixture illuminates the room.

The 3 x 16 foot main hall access to the bedrooms and bathroom is through a panel door on the southeast wall of the dining room (photo 145-4-F-17). This hall directly accesses bedroom nos.

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2 and 3 (photo 145-4-F-18). A 1-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-framed window pierces the southeast wall at the end of the hall. A single ceiling fixture illuminates the main hall at its juncture with a 3 x 9 foot side hall that accesses the bathroom and bedroom no. 1 (photo 145-4-F-19). The hall flooring is wall-to-wall carpeting framed by a wide baseboard. A recessed linen closet and a paneled door to the attic stairway open into the side hall on the northwest wall (photo 145-4-F-20).

The 6 x 9 foot bathroom features two narrow casement windows on the southeast wall in single arrangement (photo 145-4-F-21); one of these is located above a built-in vanity with drawers. Flooring is linoleum. A single wall fixture above the sink and mirror illuminates the room.

The 13 x 12 foot bedroom no. 1, accessed from the end of the side hall, features a walk-in closet behind a panel door on the northwest wall (photo 145-4-F-22). Three 1-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-framed windows (two on the southeast and one on the southwest) pierce the walls (photo 145-4-F-23). Flooring is wall-to-wall carpet framed by a wide baseboard; flooring in the walk-in closet is linoleum. Single ceiling fixtures in both the bedroom and closet provide illumination.

The 12 x 13 foot bedroom no. 2 is located through a panel door at the opposite end of the side hall from bedroom no. 1 (photo 145-4-F-24). This room features a walk-in closet behind a panel door through the southeast wall (photo 145-4-F-25). A small casement window pierces the northeast closet wall. Two 1-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-framed windows pierce the northeast bedroom wall. Flooring in bedroom no. 2 is wall-to-wall carpet framed by a wide baseboard. A single ceiling florescent fixture provides illumination.

The 13 x 11 foot bedroom no. 3 is located through a panel door at the east corner of the main hall. It features a walk-in closet similar to the one in bedroom no. 2 (photo 145-4-F-26), four 1-light over 1-light, double-hung, wood-framed windows: two on the northeast wall, and one each on the southeast and southwest walls (photo 145-4-F-27). Flooring is wall-to-wall carpet framed by a wide baseboard. Single ceiling fixtures in both the bedroom and closet provide illumination.

The project area is located about five miles southwest of the town of Bishop, Inyo County, California. The Bishop Creek System is primarily located along the south, middle, and north forks of Bishop Creek on the steep eastern slopes of the southern Sierra Nevada Range. Plant 4 is one of five plants sited at varying elevations along Bishop Creek. Situated in the middle of the Bishop Creek System, Plant 4 is northeast of Plants 2 and 3, and southwest of Plants 5 and 6.

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II. HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Please refer to the "Historical Context" sections in the general Historic American Engineering Record for the Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System (HAER No. CA-145) for historical information regarding Bishop Creek Plant 4.

Each of the five Bishop Creek power plants, and Control Station, were originally developed with an associated residential complex occupied by operating and maintenance crews; all have now been removed with exception of small remaining enclaves at Plant 4, Control Station, and a single house at Plant 6. Several of these houses, such as Building 115, Plant 4, were constructed during the 1920s to accommodate additional workers needed to operate the power plants after the final Bishop Creek expansion phase. The company development of employee living areas, especially at Plant 4, permitted comprehensive planning seldom seen in privately developed residential areas during this period. The setting of Building 115, Plant 4, still retains many elements of the old residential planning in this area, including picturesque curving streets, houses sited on terraces with stone retaining walls, manicured front lawns with unified groupings of shade trees, and integrally designed lighting standards.

III. SOURCES

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IV. PROJECT INFORMATION

This Historic American Engineering Record documentation of Building 115, Plant 4, Bishop Creek Hydroelectric System, was undertaken because the building represents excess housing. SCE has automated the Bishop Creek power plants. Automation of the power plants has made it unnecessary to have on-site crews, thus, residential units like this cottage have become obsolete.

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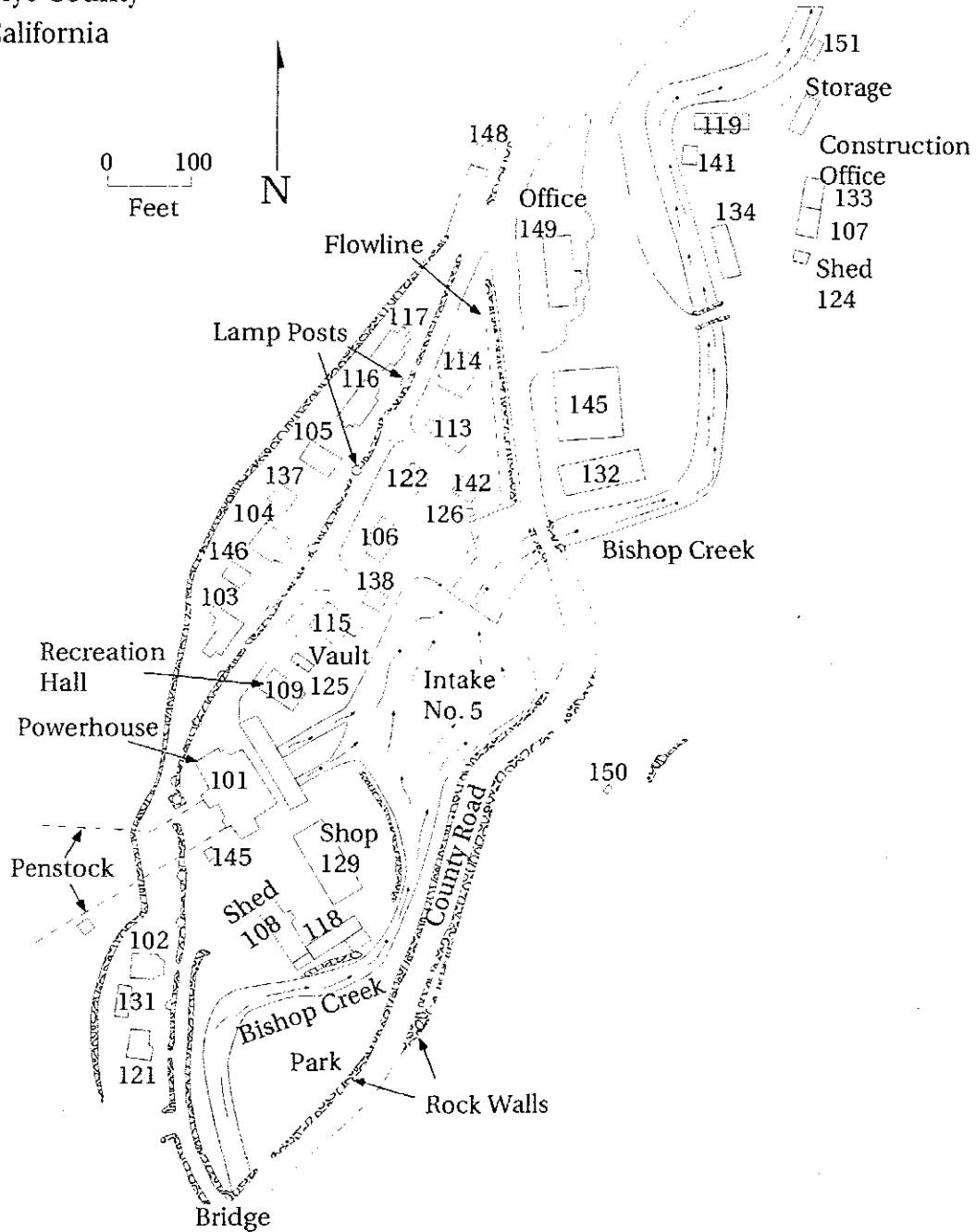
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